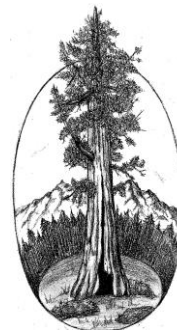




**NEWS** Sequoia National Forest  
*Giant Sequoia National Monument*  
Western Divide Ranger District



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: July 16, 2011

Contact: Georgia Dempsey at 559-782-3120, ext. 790

**“LION FIRE” GROWS TO 600 ACRES**

**SEQUOIA NATIONAL FOREST** Forest Officials are managing the *Lion Fire* in the Golden Trout Wilderness on the Sequoia National Forest. This lightning-caused fire was found on the 8<sup>th</sup> of July at 1:30 pm ½ mile to the west of Lion Meadows and east of the Little Kern River. Since then it has grown to approximately 600 acres. There are currently no threats to life or property. The Sequoia National Forest is in command of the fire. The Lion Meadows landowner has been extremely grateful and cooperative in assisting the fire effort by allowing crews on the property so they can manage the fire.

Resources assigned to the incident include the Peppermint Helicopter, Springville Hotshots and two Sequoia Wildland Fire Modules from the Sequoia National Forest. Approximately 50 firefighters and overhead staff are engaging the incident.

The fire is burning in Jeffrey pine on the southern boundary and into red fir at higher elevations to the east. The fire is predominantly creeping through the needle cast and downed dead wood. Small fire runs are occurring when the fire hits drier pockets of fuel. To the north, the fire is following Sheep Creek. Sparse fuels on the western boundary are limiting fire growth along the Little Kern River. Damp fuels from the storms of last winter, coupled with a trough of moderate weather, are also modulating the fire behavior. This ground fire is moving slowly downhill toward the Little Kern River, but most of the activity is on the eastern and north-eastern flanks, as this is the primary direction of spread. Moisture and weather conditions are ideal for the fire to consume ground fuels with very little torching into the trees. “This fire is going to have very beneficial effects” District Ranger Priscilla Summers stated. “Restoring the natural role of fire will increase the health and resilience of the forest.”

Anyone hiking trails into or along the Little Kern River should anticipate smoke settling into the valleys in the late evening and early morning hours. This is based upon inversion patterns that hold smoke in low lying areas. In the evenings, down canyon winds will likely push the smoke down the Kern drainage. By mid-morning, these inversions have been lifting and the smoke has been dispersing to the northeast. For others concerned with smoke issues, monitoring equipment has been set up around the fire in various locations to monitor for small particulates associated with smoke. Thus far smoke impacts have been relatively light due to favorable weather patterns.

Trails to the north and south of Lion Meadows will be closed while the fire front passes this area, which is expected to begin Friday July 15, 2011. Please call the Western Divide Ranger District for current trail conditions (559-539-2607).

Strategies for managing the fire are taking into consideration firefighter and public safety, protection of property, air quality concerns, cost management and ecological restoration benefits for the Sierra Nevada.

Forest Officials recently met with San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District to discuss consider air quality and fire strategies, keeping public health as a primary interest.

For more information regarding the fire, contact Public Information Officer Georgia Dempsey at 559-782-3120 ext. 790.